

REAL TIME BACKUP SYSTEM FOR COMPUTER USERS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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Field of the Invention

10 The present invention relates generally to real time computer backup systems, and, more specifically, to a mechanism for recording and interpreting user actions (including user gestures) for real time backup.

Discussion of the Prior Art

15 Users of personal computers often experience problems when attempting to save data, for example, to a computer hard drive or floppy disk. Sources of problems include downloading of viruses, power outages, and making simple mistakes, which often result in the loss of important
20 information. There are backup systems that function to help prevent some of these problems.

A first backup system, described at
http://www.systemrestore.com/NetMass and available from
25 SystemSafe™, is an automated online backup and real-time recovery solution through a server that provides typical users with the same data management benefits as are available to the largest corporations. These benefits include compression, sophisticated encryption, network
30 deployment, hands-off operation, IT policy/management, and offsite storage. Designed specifically to support desktop and laptop computers, the SystemSafe recovery

system automatically backs up computer systems via a network connection to the NetMass data center. Simply put, the SystemSafe system automatically compresses, securely encrypts, and then transmits a user's data to off-site storage locations on a user defined schedule. While this system is a very effective backup system, it cannot work if the user is not connected to the Internet, or if the user's modem is not working.

A second system, LiveVault, which is similar to the first system, uses real time to backup information immediately and constantly. Unlike conventional batch backup products, LiveVault backs up changes to data in real time. The technology integrates byte-level replication with an intelligent self-managing storage archive. Byte-level replication provides a low load on both the communications services and the production servers, while keeping current data fully protected. This enables, for the first time, server backup over lower cost, lower speed communications lines. The automated multi-tier online storage system eliminates the need for repeated full backups by synthesizing full backups without placing additional demands on the communications network.

A problem with this second system is that if the user terminates his/her connection, all information that was being backed is immediately lost.

A third system, available through Double-Take and described at <http://www.nsisw.com/pages/dtakewin.htm>, is similar to both the first and second systems discussed above. Double-Take, however, backs up only the most

current files in a computer and not entire files where only one small change may have occurred. After the initial synchronization of files, Double-Take's real-time data replication transmits only the byte-level changes, thus using the smallest amount of network bandwidth possible. Other technologies may need to transmit an entire disk block or may retransmit the whole file regardless of how much or how little data actually changed. This provides the best possible protection at the lowest cost.

While this third system is the most effective of the three, it is still vulnerable to a modem break down.

Other problems that occur with these back up systems is that they do not back up embedded devices that are not connected to the Internet, such as a clock, watch, television, and a radio. Additionally, having a constant and immediate connection with servers may make the process very slow and cause many problems.

It is highly desirable to provide a system for tracking and backing all information that a user generates on computer devices (including embedded devices) in real time.

It is further highly desirable to provide a real-time backup system that tracks user generated information, including user actions and saved files in a computer, and sends the information to a remote server via the Internet.

Summary of the Invention

5 It is an object of the present invention to provide a system for tracking and backing all information that a user generates on the user's computer devices (including embedded devices) in real time.

10 Another object of this invention is to provide a real-time backup system that tracks user generated information, including user actions and saved files in a computer, and sends the information to a remote server via the Internet.

15 The present invention relates to tracking and backing all the information that a user generates. including user actions and saved files in a computer, on the user's computer devices (including embedded devices) in real time. A server records user actions and gestures (via various devices such as TV cameras) and transmits all of
20 this information to a remote server via the Internet. This remote server includes a virtual map of all the embedded devices on a computer that the person uses. The server immediately starts to interpret the user's actions (including user gestures) that are tracked, monitored and
25 recorded by television cameras to record user gestures.

30 In one implementation, the invention stores user actions that are related to data generation (e.g. actions that called some links where data is stored, or executed some programs that generated data). In another variant, the remote server generates and downloads the same files that are downloaded on the local user computer devices. For

example, if a person begins to download a program, the server may also download the same program on a remote backup server. This way, if the user loses this program, the program can be retrieved automatically through the provided server on the Internet. If user's files are backed up by regular backup periodically, relevant data that were stored by real time backup servers may be eliminated.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Further features, aspects and advantages of the apparatus and methods of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings where:

Figure 1 illustrates a general picture for a backup server.

Figure 2 shows how a data base of user actions is organized.

Figure 3 shows how a media identifier module works.

Figure 4 generally illustrates the manner in which data is stored in the backup server from Figure 3.

Figure 5 continues the explanation of the database of programs shown in Figure 1.

Figure 6 is an explanation of the history of user actions.

Figure 7 describes a media identifier recognition module.

Figure 8 illustrates command vs. data generation identification.

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Figure 9 shows remove conditions for the real - time back up system.

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Figure 10 is a flowchart of the method of real-time backup.

Detailed Description of the
Preferred Embodiments of the Invention

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Figure 1 shows a general picture for a backup server. In this Figure, the reference number 100 represents the network. The user 101 is using many devices such as a telephone 106, a computer 105, a watch 104, a recorder 103, and a calculator 102. User 101 performs various actions on the devices around him. These actions are recorded by a video camera 107, and by a processor 110 that is running in the computer 105. Other embedded devices may also contain this processor 110 that records a user's actions. Some items are connected to the network, such as the computer 105, or the telephone 106. Other devices, such as the watch, 104, or calculator 102, are not connected to the network.

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A similar description can be seen for another user 101 at a different location. This user also has several video cameras 107, and a computer 105. Video cameras surround the user and his/her devices in more than one area to

provide a maximum back up for all the user's devices.
The video cameras can have more than one use. They can
be used as forms of security and as ways to help provide
information for backup. A user's actions are stored in a
5 database 106 of user actions. A user's actions are
interpreted by a translator server 108. The translator
interprets which actions made by the user actually change
the database. This information is sent to a backup
server 109, where it is decided what should be saved and
10 what actions should be performed. Any suitable gesture
recognition procedure may be used in the practice of this
invention. One suitable procedure, for example, is
disclosed in copending application no. 09/079,754 for
"Apparatus and Method For User Recognition Employing
15 Behavioral Passwords," filed May 15, 1998, the
disclosure of which is herein incorporated by reference.

The backup server 109 also downloads files that were
downloaded by the user. In some cases, a user may
20 generate new data by using a program, for example if the
user was using a program that generates new prime
numbers, the translator of the user's action would
understand that in order to obtain certain data, the
translator needs executables. The translator may require
25 that some executables need to be downloaded in order for
the server to be able to keep up with the user's actions.
For instance, if the user has a program that can generate
new data, the server would download the same program and
enter the same commands as the user did. This saves time
30 because it reduces the time spent on having to copy and
save data.

Figure 2 shows how the data base of user actions is organized. The start and finish of the time alignment is recorded under column 200. Column 201 contains the list of devices that user actions were performed on. For example, a laptop, television, recorder, telephone, controller, desktop, watches, and a palmtop. The form of media used to control these devices is located under column 202. For example, if a person used their voice to activate a device, that would be listed. Changes in the devices are recorded under correlation column 206. Column 203 gives the names of users for each device. Column 204 lists the location of each device, and column 205 lists the environment of each place.

Figure 3 shows how the media identifier module works. The reference number 300 represents the media identifier module. The media identifier module interprets what form of media a person used to perform a function. A user could function a program in many ways, such as by using voice, a gesture, or typing 301. Module 302 is responsible for being able to tell the difference between a command or a data generation identification. After the data is sent through module 302, the data are sent to module 303 where the commands are interpreted. These commands could be commands such as commands to generate new data 304, change old data, or a user interface 306. If the data is identified as data that generates new data, the data are labeled in module 309. The data labeler labels data according to whether they have a link or not. If the data has a link, the data is processed as a link data. Link module 307 connects commands with data. For example, if certain data were found using a

link, the link module would show this. Module 308 lists the addresses of the links that need to be used to get data 310, storing data in backup, is described below.

5 Figure 4 provides a description of how data are stored in the backup server from Fig. 3. Column 401 shows the types of data. This includes new data, old data, links to data, and programs that generate data. Column 402 lists the names of the user's who created the data using
10 programs. Column 403 shows the time all the data was generated. This also includes when the data had been changed or when the data were connected to links. Column 404 lists all the commands used to create new data. This is important for backup because this is used to restore
15 files and data. Column 405 shows the types of media used to operate a program. Media includes voice, gestures, typing, etc. Column 407 lists the links to websites where data were obtained, so data could be obtained through the website instead of the user to save time.
20 Column 408 lists locations and column 409 lists remove conditions.

Figure 5 continues the explanation of the database of programs, which was described above in connection with
25 Figure 1. Column 501 lists the programs used, such as signal processing, prime processing, and an html maker. Column 502 lists the names of the users for each program. Column 503 is responsible for keeping track of the time for generation of data and changes. This column is also
30 responsible for keeping track of data history. Column 504 lists commands used to control programs. This is important because it helps restore data. Column 505

(operating system) shows what operating system holds data. Column 506 shows the devices that were being used by programs. Column 507 lists the sources that were used to obtain data, such as voice, keyboard, or text.

5 Column 500 is an index which shows where data are to be stored.

Figure 6 shows a database that gives an explanation of the history of user actions. Column 601 records the
10 actions that are inputted to control a program. Each action fits under a designated class. For example, if two actions (say, acton 1) can cause the same program to do the same thing (e.g. open same file?), then put these actions in the same class, act 1. Similarly, some other
15 actions are put in the same class, like act 2, act 3, etc. This is shown in column 602. This will also be discussed in connection with another Figure. Column 603 is in charge of keeping a count of how often a class is formed by similar actions. It should be noted that
20 actions do not stay in the input column 601 for a long period of time. If these actions fall into a class, the actions are automatically withdrawn from the input column. Column 604 creates a tree of the order of actions that took place when a program was being used.
25 For example, if a program was opened by saying a command, this would become the start of the tree. Then, when the programmed new action took place, this would be put in the tree in accordance to the first action. Column 605 is in charge of placing an index to a file from the tree
30 index 604. For example, the actions change data so the index shows the files from after the latest change.

Figure 7 describes the media identifier recognition module. The reference number 700 represents some form of media input, gestures, speaking, typing, etc., and the reference number 701 identifies the type of media used.

5 This is done by telling where the data came from. For example, if the data are created by the use of a key board, the data are called keyboard input 703, but if the data are created by the use of a microphone, the data are called voice input 702. Also, if the data are created

10 using a video camera, the data are called video input 704, and hand written data are called written input 705. The next module is the media data recognition. Voice 702 is recognized by Automatic speech recognition system 706. The video 704 is recognized by gesture recognition 707,

15 or lip reading recognition 708. Finally, handwriting 705 is recognized by the automatic hand writing system 709.

Figure 8 explains command vs. data generation identification. Procedure 800 receives input labels that were processed in Figure 7. Element represented at 801

20 is in charge of interpreting the media used by the user. Reference number 802 represents gesture, 803 text, and 804 audio/video, represent the form of media that the data are in when the data are received into the backup

25 server. The data that are gesture generated are then determined to be related or unrelated to data generation. This is represented at 805 and 806. Text must be verified to be a command or not, so the text is sent through a command verifier 808, and then it is determined

30 if the text is a command or not. At 810, the data are separated from the data that is a command and the data that is not. If the data is a command, it is interpreted

809, but if the data is not a command, it is stored 811.
Audio/Video data is stored in a media file 807.

5 Figure 9 shows what the remove conditions are for the
real-time back up system. Module 900 shows that a
regular back up is performed. This could be done weekly.
This data can be removed. It is decided whether data
should be removed or not by the following circumstances:
10 how old it is, if there are newer versions of this data,
and how often is it being used. This is decided by the
time deadline module 901. Step 902 determines the number
of new backup copies that exceed the threshold. For
example, if a new version of an old program has been
released and downloaded, the older version would be
15 deleted. At step 903, the equivalent file or link is
stored somewhere. The only condition where a file cannot
be removed is shown in 904, where another database has
link to a file that another database needs.

20 Figure 10 is a flowchart of the method of real-time
backup. First, the method, at step 1001, records a
user's actions. Then the actions are identified at step
1002. Then, the user actions are interpreted in a user
media recognizer 1004, labeling of actions as commands or
25 data generators take place. Step 1005 labels commands
that are related to data generation. At step 1006, the
data from 1004 is then stored. Step 1007 stores the
links to data programs and commands that generate data.
Step 1008 is where data and links are removed if the
30 conditions are satisfied.

5 While the invention has been particularly shown and described with respect to illustrative and preformed embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that the foregoing and other changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention which should be limited only by the scope of the appended claims.